



Human Rights Commission

Office of Minority/Women Business Enterprise

Office of Contract Compliance

Office of Dispute Resolution

For Release: August 31, 1988

SHANTI PROJECT: Report of Investigation and mediation of Complaint filed under Administrative Code Chapters 12A & 12B

JURISDICTION

The Human Rights Commission (HRC) of the City and County of San Francisco is the administrative agency primarily responsible for the enforcement of the City's nondiscrimination provisions. Under Chapter 12A of the Administrative Code, the Commission is authorized to "Study, investigate, mediate and hold public hearings on community-wide problems arising in this City and County which may result in intergroup tensions or discrimination because of race, religion, color, ancestry, age, sex, sexual orientation, physical handicap or place of birth."

The Commission is further authorized under Article 12B of the Administrative Code to investigate and mediate complaints of discrimination, based on the above enumerated categories, involving the City and County of San Francisco in all contracts, franchises, leases, concessions or other agreements involving real or personal property. Shanti Project is a contractor of the Department of Public Health, and is subject to the nondiscrimination provision of Chapter 12B.

This Report of Investigation and Mediation is issued pursuant to the Commission's authority to reach a voluntary settlement to disputes through

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investigation and mediation. As a result of a process of mediation between the Human Rights Commission and Shanti Project, Shanti Project has agreed to take the action outlined below to correct and prevent possible discriminatory practices, and to comply with nondiscrimination provisions of the San Francisco Administrative Code. The HRC shall retain jurisdiction in this matter for a period of two years in order to effectuate and monitor compliance with the terms of this agreement. Failure to make any report or to comply with any other requirements as contained in this Report shall be grounds for the HRC, after a hearing upon notice to Shanti Project, to institute enforcement procedures under the nondiscrimination ordinances of the City and County of San Francisco, as set forth in the Administrative Code and Police Code, and to impose any sanction authorized therein as it may deem appropriate.

COMPLAINT:

On March 30, 1988, the Human Rights Commission filed an official complaint of noncompliance against Shanti Project, a contractor of the department of Public Health, under Article 12A and 12B of the Administrative Code. The complaint was filed on behalf of the HRC to ascertain Shanti Project's compliance with the City's nondiscrimination contracting provisions, and other contracting requirements. The complaint alleged that Shanti Project had discriminated against minorities and women in the employment, selection, evaluation, and promotion of staff. It was further alleged that Shanti Project had failed to develop and implement an affirmative action program in regard to the recruitment, selection, and hiring of minority and women staff. Existing personnel policies at Shanti Project were alleged to have been applied in a discriminatory manner, particularly in regard to minorities and women. Finally, it was alleged that minorities and women have been underrepresented in City funded services at Shanti Project.

With the cooperation of Shanti Project, particularly the Personnel Director, the formal investigation of these allegations began in early April, 1988. At all times in the investigation Shanti Project demonstrated its willingness to provide full and complete access to personnel and records, and its willingness to reach a mediated resolution of this matter. The Commission's extensive investigation of the allegations contained in the complaint included an exhaustive review of documents, personnel files and policies, workforce and other statistical analysis, and interviews with more than fifty current or former Shanti Project staff and volunteers. The Commission was also contacted by a number of Shanti clients during the course of the investigation, these individuals were given an opportunity to provide information and input.

In all aspects of the HRC investigation particular attention was devoted to guaranteeing input from a broadly representative sample of Shanti Project staff. This included extensive interviews with the Executive Director, both Assistant Directors, and other managerial employees. The Chair and President of the Board of Directors were interviewed, as were two other current Board members; four former Board members were also interviewed. Interviews were held with current and former staff directly involved in the matters subject to this investigation. Finally, all current Shanti Project staff were given formal notice of their opportunity to contact HRC staff directly to "express concern about - or support for - Shanti;" memorandum of April 21, 1988, to Shanti staff. As a result of this memorandum, numerous individual Shanti staff did contact HRC staff in regard to the matters subject to this investigation. Interviews were held with all current staff who requested to be interviewed, although many individuals requested that interviews be conducted on a

confidential basis. All reasonable requests for interviews off site or outside of normal working hours, including weekends, were granted. Former employees who were directly involved in personnel decisions under review by the Commission were provided the opportunity to be interviewed or to submit written testimony. Finally, the Commission received a number of unsolicited letters, including anonymous material, from individuals identifying themselves as former staff or volunteers.

While numerous issues relating to personnel actions and policies were reviewed by the HRC in the course of the investigation, at no time in the investigation have the valuable efforts of Shanti Project volunteers been called into question. The scope of the investigation was limited to the period January, 1986 to April, 1988. The primary focus of the investigation was on City funded services and activities. The investigation did not address allegations of fiscal irregularities, as this is not within the jurisdiction of the HRC. If in the course of the investigation credible allegations of fiscal irregularities had been received or other material discrepancies, these would have been referred to the Department of Public Health; no such allegations were received and no such referrals were made.

REPORT OF MEDIATION:

Following the HRC investigation of the matters subject to the complaint, HRC staff met with representative of Shanti Project to discuss mediation and resolution of these matters. Pursuant to the investigation and mediation authority of the HRC, Shanti Project has agreed to take the following actions to correct and prevent possible discriminatory practices.

I. Affirmative Action Program - Analysis of data on the demographics of the workforce of Shanti Project, as of June 1, 1988, reveal an underutilization of women and minorities in certain employment

classifications. Specifically, the data reported indicates an underutilization of women in Executive positions, and an underutilization of minorities in Department Manager, Staff Counselor, and Off-site Worker classifications. Underutilization was determined by the differential between the number of minority and female employees actually utilized in a given employment classification and the number who would be utilized if employment were proportional to the San Francisco labor market. As of March 30, 1988, the date the complaint was filed, Shanti Project did not have in place an affirmative action program to correct this underutilization. Since the filing of the HRC complaint, Shanti Project has moved swiftly to develop an appropriate affirmative action program. The lack of an affirmative action program appears to be the result of poor record keeping and defective management policies, and does not appear to have been motivated by discriminatory or deceptive action.

As part of the voluntary mediation and settlement of this matter, Shanti Project shall commit itself to a hiring and promotional policy based on federal Office of Contract Compliance guidelines, which has as its general goal an intergrated workforce of women and minorities, reflective of the San Francisco labor market and requisite skills availability in EEO-1 job classifications as applicable. HRC staff shall be directed to immediately develop and implement an affirmative action consent agreement between the City and County of San Francisco and Shanti Project. This consent agreement shall formalize Shanti Project's obligations in compliance with the affirmative action and nondiscrimination provisions as set forth in Chapter 12B of the City's Administrative Code. Special attention shall be devoted to the addressing the underutilization of women and minorities in targeted positions as identified.

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Such affirmative action consent agreement shall include a specific program to engage in an aggressive outreach and recruitment effort designed to increase the number of qualified women and minority applicants for employment. Such agreement shall provide, in part:

- 1) That all hiring and promotional practices shall be conducted without discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, ancestry, age, sex, sexual orientation or disability, including AIDS and associated medical conditions, or other factors as prohibited by state and federal law.
- 2) That there shall be no discrimination or retaliation by Shanti Project, or its Board of Directors, against any person because of opposition to any practices which are protected under Chapter 12B of the Administrative Code.
- 3) While goals and timetables are inherently flexible concepts, they are reasonable expectations of performance if sincerely incorporated and pursued. The measure of compliance with the provisions of this consent agreement will be based, in part, on evidence of good faith efforts on the part of Shanti Project in attempting to achieve appropriate goals and timetables. Appropriate goals and timetables shall be established after consultation with HRC and Department of Public Health staff.
- 4) Shanti Project shall be required to file a report semi-annually, commencing December 31, 1988 through December 31, 1991, with the Human Rights Commission describing its actions in compliance with the above requirements. Failure to make any report or to fully comply with any of the requirements set forth in this section shall constitute grounds for the Human Rights Commission, after a hearing upon due notice to Shanti Project, to institute enforcement procedures under the nondiscrimination

ordinances of the City and County of San Francisco, and to impose any sanction authorized therein as it may deem appropriate. The overall consent agreement will be reviewed by the Commission semi-annually, unless the Commission deems it necessary to review more often, at which time new goals for hiring and promotion may be established.

II. Personnel Management and Policies - The HRC investigation examined allegations that existing personnel policies, including evaluation and promotion of staff, have been applied in a discriminatory manner, particularly in regard to women and minority staff. The limited number of minorities and women in promotable positions made it difficult for the HRC to reach any conclusion in regard to differential treatment in promotion; this area is best addressed through an affirmative action program, as described above, and through a review of personnel policies as outlined below.

The HRC's investigation of allegations concerning areas of personnel management included an exhaustive review of documents, including personnel files and policies, including interviews with current and former staff members, and members of the Board Personnel committee. The Commission's review of personnel files, including terminated employees for the time period under review, reveal only limited substantive evidence that personnel actions were motivated by either race or gender. However, the investigation did reveal an inconsistent application of existing personnel policies, and personnel actions based on factors other than performance. The investigation also raised concerns as to the level of Board of Director involvement in personnel actions, particularly involvement by individual Board members prior to formal Board action.

In order to address the management deficits identified as part of the HRC investigation, the Board of Directors of Shanti Project has agreed to immediately institute the actions described in the attached statement from the Shanti Board of Directors.

Shanti Project acknowledges that in order to expand and grow, and to meet the needs of a changing client population, Shanti Project needs to acknowledge its internal management deficits, and to develop swift corrective action to address these concerns. As a private, non-profit agency, responsibility for the internal management and governance of Shanti Project rests primarily with the Board of Directors. However, if the Board is not able to swiftly implement the corrective measure outlined above, the Commission is prepared to recommend that the Department of Public Health institute contract modifications to address these concerns, or in the alternative, seek to identify other possible contractors. The HRC shall review the issue of sole sourcing of the Shanti contract as part of its semi-annual review, and a decision on the continuation of this policy shall be reached only after a careful examination of what corrective measures have been adopted by the Board of Directors of Shanti Project.

Services to Minority Communities - The HRC examined allegations that minorities and women are underrepresented in City funded services at Shanti Project, particularly in the Residence Program. While in the United States as a whole, minorities are disproportionately represented among AIDS cases, the rate of cases has been relatively lower in San Francisco. However, as the population of persons with AIDS continues to grow in San Francisco, an increasing percentage will be women and ethnic minorities. The Department of Public Health has begun to address issues

of concern presented by the specific needs of a changing client population, and individual service providers will have to make a similar examination of their ability to meet the needs of ethnic minorities and women. The Human Rights Commission reaffirms its commitment to working to ensure that services are provided to all persons affected by AIDS, including women, minorities, low income individuals, and individuals with a history of drug usage.

The HRC investigation of services currently offered at Shanti Project indicates that while the number of minority and women clients is relatively small, they are proportional to the number of minorities and women with AIDS in the City and County of San Francisco.

In order to address the management deficits related to provision of service to minority communities, the Board of Directors of Shanti Project has agreed to immediately institute the following actions:

- 1) Shanti Project shall include in its annual program proposal to the Department of Public Health a specific plan for addressing the special needs of women and ethnic minority clients in services provided. This should include guarantees that women and minorities are an active part of the planning process, and in the monitoring of contract services. In addition, Shanti Project shall work to guarantee that services provided are culturally sensitive, and language appropriate.
- 2) Shanti shall immediately develop and distribute to all individuals in the Residence Program written information on program policies and procedures, including admissions criteria and grievance procedures. Copies of these policies shall be filed with the Fair Housing Unit at the Human Rights Commission.

Analysis of the number of women and minorities housed in the Residence Program indicates that while the number of individuals housed has been small, particularly women, services provided have been consistent with the percentage of San Francisco AIDS cases who are minority or women. However, in the course of reviewing the operation of the Residence Program, other areas of concern were noted by the HRC. Foremost among these were concerns in regard to the manner in which individuals were terminated from the Residence Program. In order to expeditiously address these concerns, HRC staff shall be immediately directed to meet with representatives from the Department of Public Health, Bay Area Lawyers for Individual Freedom, and AIDS-related residential service providers (including, but not limited to, Shanti, San Francisco AIDS Foundation, and Catholic Charities) to formulate appropriate recommendations for mechanisms to address complaints involving residential services. This shall include, but not limited to, termination, eviction, or removal from services. These recommendations shall be reported to the Human Rights Commission for consideration and action within 90 days. Such discussion shall include the consideration of establishing an advocacy/ombudsman system, or other appropriate form of mediation for addressing these concerns. —

Conclusion:

This Report of Investigation and Mediation is issued pursuant to the Commission's authority to reach a voluntary settlement to disputes through investigation and mediation. The Commission shall retain jurisdiction in the matters subject to this investigation for a period of two years in order to effectuate and monitor compliance with the terms of this agreement. Failure to make any report or to comply with any other

requirement as contained in this Report shall be grounds for the HRC, after a hearing upon notice to Shanti Project, to institute enforcement procedures under the nondiscrimination ordinances of the City and County of San Francisco, as set forth in the Administrative Code and Police Code, and to impose any sanction authorized therein as it may deem appropriate.

It is understood and agreed upon by Shanti Project and the HRC that this Report of Investigation and Mediation, and attached Board Statement, constitutes neither an admission or concession of liability on the part of Shanti Project. It is the sole intention of the parties hereto that the settlement provided for in this instrument is solely in furtherance of a compromise of disputed claims between the HRC and Shanti Project.

8-31-88

DATE

BY:

Frank Anderson

Frank Anderson
Interim Director
Human Rights Commission

8-30-88

DATE

BY:

Carol Tocher

Carol Tocher, Chair
Board of Directors
Shanti Board

8-30-88

DATE

BY:

Douglas P. Holloway

Douglas P. Holloway
Board of Directors
Shanti Project



**SHANTI
PROJECT**

SHANTI PROJECT

BOARD OF DIRECTORS STATEMENT

AUGUST 30, 1988

In June 1988, Shanti's Board of Directors, on its own, established an independent Internal Review Committee in response to certain criticisms and statements of concern about certain aspects of Shanti operations. The Chair of the Committee is Douglas P. Holloway, Senior Vice President and Chief Credit Examiner of Wells Fargo & Company. Other members are Gayling Gee, R.N., Director of Outpatient Nursing at San Francisco General Hospital; Reggie Williams, person with ARC and Co-Chair of the Aids Task Force of Black and White Men Together, San Francisco-Bay Area; Lynn Clark, a law firm Accountant and former board member and officer of the Junior League of San Francisco; and John Fulton, Regional Sales Director of California Pension Administrators and Consultants, Inc. The Committee members include both "new" and "old" board members who bring with them a broad range of public and private sector organization perspectives, professionalism, experience with AIDS services in various communities and previous experience as board members of other not for profit organizations.

The Internal Review Committee is serving as an advisory committee to the full Board of Directors. Its purpose is to respond to the allegations raised in the press and before the Human Rights Commission and to critically evaluate the Project's organizational process and program

operations and make specific recommendations to ensure the Project's structural integrity, including the oversight role of its Board of Directors, its ongoing ability to provide services, its management competence and its ability to adapt to the changing needs and requirements of its client population. In this capacity, the Internal Review Committee has interviewed numerous members of both current and former staff, clients, volunteers, board members and other interested parties and is conducting a full-scale investigation of key aspects of the Project, including but not limited to, management, personnel policies, operations and security, affirmative action plans, its policies governing sexual and other forms of harassment, the pertinence of its program activities, long range strategic planning and its board responsibilities. Particular emphasis is being placed on the following key areas:

1. Board of Directors governance and oversight
2. Board independence from the management process
3. Policies concerning employment, both direct and indirect, of individual Board members
4. Board membership, composition and community representation
5. Board internal and external communication
6. Activities of Board's standing committees with particular emphasis on the independence of its Personnel Committee
7. Efficacy of Shanti management with full consideration being given to appropriate corrective action as required
8. Policies concerning sexual and other forms of harassment and discrimination
9. Application of policies and procedures in a manner that might tend to create a hostile and intimidating environment

10. Personnel policies and procedures including hiring and promotional practices
11. Uniform application of Personnel policies and procedures regarding staff
12. Uniform application of policies and procedures regarding clients, residents and volunteers
13. Opportunities for job training and internal advancement
14. Effectiveness of grievance processes and procedures for staff, clients, residents and volunteers
15. Management representation on and participation with other community support organizations
16. Strategic planning process, both short and long term
17. Development and coordination of services with other agencies to ensure all communities are being adequately served
18. New program development in collaboration with the Department of Public Health including possibility of modification to existing models in order to adequately serve its constituents including the needs of special populations of women, children, minorities and IV drug users
19. Fund development activities particularly those directed toward the community at large

To date, the Committee has spent over 200 hours meeting with current and former Shanti staff members, volunteers and clients, as well as various other concerned members of the community. It is expected that recommendations by the Committee will be presented to the full Board of Directors commencing at its meeting in late September and will be acted upon by the Directors no later than December 31, 1988. It is expected that both immediate and long-term actions will be recommended and that certain actions may require additional study and review.

The Board of Directors of the Shanti Project welcomes the opportunity to reassess its current operations and to initiate any changes it deems appropriate in order to assure Shanti's continued ability to provide support services to people with AIDS. It recognizes that Shanti's rapid growth over the last several years may have resulted in a need for Shanti to adjust to certain stresses and strains inherent in such growth. Shanti reaffirms its commitments to continue to provide the best available support services to all people with AIDS and to act in close collaboration with other community AIDS agencies.

8.30.88

Date

BY Carol Tocher

Carol Tocher, Chair
Board of Directors
Shanti Project Board

8.30.88

Date

BY Sam Mills

Sam Mills, President
Board of Directors
Shanti Project Board

8-30-88

Date

BY Douglas P. Holloway

Douglas P. Holloway, Chair
Internal Review Committee
Board of Directors
Shanti Project Board

HRC:CORR26

Dispute Costs Shanti Money and Support

*By Lori Olszewski
Chronicle Staff Writer*

The Shanti Project, an internationally known AIDS counseling and support service, has lost volunteers and donations while controversy continues to swirl around its executive director.

Jim Geary, a former Shanti volunteer who rose to a \$73,000-a-year job as the director of the much-praised organization, has been at the center of an investigation by the San Francisco Human Rights Commission. The probe began March 30 after employees and former employees alleged racial and sexual discrimination, including sexual harassment of men and women, at Shanti.

A recently completed investigative report for the Human Rights Commission outlines some of that criticism of Geary's management style, according to sources familiar with the report.

However, the Human Rights Commission probably will never make the report public in an attempt to solve Shanti's problems without further damaging its reputation, according to sources familiar with the investigation.

The toll the continuing controversy has taken on Shanti, which serves 2,000 people with AIDS, is documented in a confidential report from a public relations consultant to Geary, Holly Smith, Shanti director of public relations, and to Sam Mills, president of the Shanti board.

"The result (of the allegations) is that the city is currently withholding a final decision on funding, donations have fallen off, volunteerism is lagging and in general, the reputation of the Shanti Project has been tarnished," the report said.

In an attempt to keep bad publicity to a minimum, the Shanti board of directors was expected to consider a settlement agreement with the Human Rights Commission during a closed meeting last night.

An announcement regarding the outcome of that meeting is expected today.

Approval of the settlement guarantees public silence on many of the damaging aspects of the Human Rights Commission investigation, sources said. In return, the Shanti board, which has created its own internal review committee, will agree to investigate and address problems found by the Human Rights Commission and its own investigation.

"There will never be an admission of guilt or a denial of guilt on any of the allegations," said a source familiar with the investigation.

Douglas Holloway, a Shanti board member and chairman of the Shanti committee performing its own investigation, said, "Our investigation is not complete and it would be inappropriate to comment."

Meanwhile, some of Geary's critics who previously spoke anonymously are now willing to have their names used with their allegations.

Marta Segovia Ashley, the former director of public relations at Shanti, said, "I will swear in a court of law that Jim Geary dropped his pants and mooned me while I sat in my office at Shanti."

Geary previously denied the mooning allegations. He did not return a recent phone call.

Sources said the Shanti board and Human Rights Commission representatives have negotiated a number of understandings and timetables for change, including possible personnel changes.

The Human Rights Commission is expected to keep the Shanti complaint open for at least two years while it monitors the agency. If satisfactory changes do not occur, public hearings could be held, sources said.

Resolution of the Human Rights Commission complaint is necessary by Tuesday, when the San Francisco Health Commission is expected to consider Shanti's \$1.26 million annual contract with the city to serve people with AIDS.

Shanti Prober Says Director Should Go

*By Lori Olszewski
Chronicle Staff Writer*

Jim Geary should not continue as executive director of the Shanti Project, says the head of an investigation into allegations of mismanagement in the internationally known AIDS organization.

Douglas Holloway, a Shanti board member chairing the internal review committee, stopped short of calling for Geary's resignation, but said it is his personal opinion that Shanti needs to place him in "a different type of environment where (Geary's) talents and skills will be better utilized."

Shanti, which provides emotional counseling and other AIDS services to 2,000 people, receives almost a third of its \$3 million budget — \$1.26 million — from the city.

"I would hope he (Geary) would continue to contribute to Shanti," said Holloway, declining to comment on reports that Geary may be offered a job as Shanti's national training director.

Holloway said he did not know if his views are shared by the 11 others on the Shanti board.

He said his five-member committee will begin to make recommendations at the end of September.

"They are setting the stage for Geary's removal. It will take some time," a source said.

Holloway's comments were made after the Shanti board of directors announced a negotiated settlement with the San Francisco Human Rights Commission, which has ended a five-month investigation into allegations of racial and sexual discrimination at Shanti, including sexual harassment.

The settlement was accepted during a closed meeting of the Shanti board of directors Tuesday night. Knowledgeable sources said the settlement was designed to solve the management problems without conducting the equivalent of a public trial.

Geary was not available for comment.

The carefully worded settlement does not mention Geary by name and does not find the organization guilty of discrimination.

It applauded the "valuable efforts" of Shanti volunteers and commits Shanti to work toward employing more women and minorities, which have been "underutilized" by the project.

It also said Shanti's number of minority and women clients is relatively small but is "proportional to the number of minorities and women with AIDS in ...San Francisco."

Geary, who rose from a Shanti volunteer to the \$73,000-a-year director's job, is credited with saving the organization from extinction during the early days of the AIDS epidemic.

However, he also is described as a cult-like leader who has been accused of showing favoritism by providing jobs to friends and personal supporters, including board members.

Shanti board chairman Carol Tocher has worked for Shanti. Shanti finance director Jess Randall, who is Geary's lover, and Robin Rose, Shanti director of counseling at San Francisco General Hospital, live with Geary.

"The dilemma is how to recognize his contributions while also dealing with the adverse publicity and morale problems at the agency," said Jeff Amory, administrative director of the Office of AIDS in the San Francisco Department of Public Health.

Amory said he will recommend on Tuesday that the city Health Commission finance Shanti through the end of the year.

"The Shanti board appears to be taking the bull by the horns and is willing to deal with this in a constructive manner," Amory said.

Holloway said his problems with Geary centered on his "management style."

"He attempted to manage by control instead of eliciting support," Holloway said.

AIDS charity settles with City

Shanti Project head
appears on way out

By Jayne Garrison
OF THE EXAMINER STAFF

Shanti Project — San Francisco's world renowned emotional support charity for people with AIDS — agreed Wednesday to investigate allegations of mismanagement that could shake the grip of the group's charismatic leader, Jim Geary.

The agreement came as part of a negotiated settlement with city human rights investigators, who've probed charges of discrimination and sexual harassment at the \$3.2 million organization for the past five months. A third of Shanti's funding is city money.

The settlement papers list 19 areas of management that Shanti will investigate, and does not mention Geary by name.

But a city source familiar with the investigation says it is understood that "starting today, a distancing is being put between Jim Geary and Shanti ... He's been the manager for the past six years. The buck's got to stop somewhere."

"It's not going to happen overnight," the source said. "And it's not going to happen in a way that's unduly disruptive to the agency. But talk to me in three months and I think you'll see that Geary is no

[See SHANTI, A-18]

◆ SHANTI from A-1

AIDS charity settles with City

longer there as executive director."

Geary, a former volunteer who raised Shanti from the Berkeley dust six years ago and turned the defunct counseling service into The City's second largest AIDS charity, could not be reached for comment early Wednesday. The largest AIDS charity is the San Francisco AIDS Foundation.

Under his leadership, Shanti grew into an integral part of San Francisco's AIDS service, offering emotional support and practical help such as housecleaning for nearly 2,000 people with AIDS each year.

Groups such as Shanti are credited with keeping The City's cost of caring for an AIDS patient to about \$35,000 to \$45,000 — half the lifetime cost for a person with AIDS elsewhere in California.

But Geary's personal style and alleged favoritism have been harshly criticized by former Shanti staff and prompted the most extensive city probe of a charity in recent years.

He's been accused of sexually harassing staff, and of discriminating against women and minorities — both on his staff and among the clients Shanti serves.

Lower level staff members have bitterly grumbled that nepotism reigns under Geary's leadership.

Paid \$73,000 a year, Geary is the highest salaried leader of an AIDS charity in San Francisco. His lover, Jess Randall, is finance director of Shanti. And their roommate, Robin Rose, is also a Shanti manager.

The City's original investigation report has not and will never be released, said principle investigator Norman Nickens.

He defended the carefully worded settlement, saying that many of the complaints against Shanti fall outside The City's Human Rights Commission's jurisdiction, which is limited to racial and sexual discrimination.

"We have concerns about the management of the agency, and we could have come out with a critical report that would have forced Shanti to appeal," Nickens said. "But Shanti would have won on the jurisdiction issue. The bottom line is that they're a private nonprofit agency."

One source privately said The City hopes, through the settlement, to achieve Geary's removal without also destroying Shanti.

"The way that place has been run, with such power at the top, if Geary left immediately the agency would fall apart," the source said.

The settlement makes a point of noting that "at no time in the investigation have the valuable efforts of Shanti Project volunteers been called into question."

It calls for Shanti to improve its hiring of women and minorities in top-level management positions, and report back to The City by Dec. 31.

It also calls on the Shanti board to investigate areas of management that fall outside The City's jurisdiction. Among them: favoritism, sexual harassment, grievance procedures, unjust evictions from Shanti's 12 residences, and the independence of the 12-member board of directors.

If concerns with management

are not addressed, the Human Rights Commission is prepared to urge health officials to strip Shanti of its \$1.26 million city annual contract, according to the settlement papers.

Former staff who criticize Geary's leadership were angrily disappointed over the settlement, having expected a harsh investigative report.

"It's a slap in the face to all the people who came forward to talk to investigators," said Marta Segovia Ashley, former public affairs director for the charity.

Ashley complained that Geary once "mooned" her in the hallway. More insulting, she said, managers were required to attend once-a-month "support meetings" at which Geary and Randall would discuss their sexual lives.

Nickens retorted: "I didn't spend months on this to come out with something that will be a whitewash."

The city's Health Commission meets Tuesday to decide whether to renew Shanti's funding while the management review is under way.

Because of the controversy, Shanti received a three-month supply of city money at the start of the fiscal year, rather than its whole city contract.

Sources say the commission is expected to continue funding the Shanti Project at least through the Dec. 31 review of its management investigation.

If Shanti has not dealt with alleged internal problems by then, sources said, the Health Commission may put the lucrative \$1.26 million contract out to bid to other charities.

San Francisco Chronicle

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EDITORIALS

Shanti's Problems

THE THREATS TO the Shanti Project's integrity must be addressed promptly and openly in order to make certain that its special role in helping 2,000 persons with AIDS, their families and friends is not further endangered.

Shanti fills a need in San Francisco that no other organization can meet. With more than 600 volunteers, it serves people who in many cases can no longer perform such routine tasks as cleaning their own homes or making their way to doctor's appointments by themselves.

It is not just the helpless but the lonely and frightened who find help from Shanti. Volunteers perform simple acts of human kindness, like holding hands and listening while those with AIDS talk about their fears and hopes.

Money cannot buy these services.

But Shanti cannot function effectively without public confidence and financial support. It depends on city funds for about a third of its \$3 million budget, and it relies on the United Way, private foundations and thousands of individual and corporate donors for the rest. Those who contribute are entitled to know their money is being well spent and that Shanti is being operated fairly and properly.

WHILE THE VOLUNTEERS have earned unwavering gratitude, charges of favoritism, sexual harassment and cultism have been aired publicly against the organization's paid management. Some charges may be unfounded, but the city's Human Rights Commission has concluded a five-month investigation by informing Shanti's board of directors that improvements in Shanti's operations are essential.

Action by the board is overdue.

